




Speech By  
**Daniel Purdie**

**MEMBER FOR NINDERRY**

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### **HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (3.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. Firstly I would like to thank the Community Support and Services Committee for its simultaneous consideration of this and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. These two pieces of legislation are similar in the human rights matters they seek to address and sit in the context of the government's Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027.

It is important that the right balance is struck between protecting lessors and tenants. Protecting both sides of the pendulum matters to the economic and social health of Queensland and therefore it is crucial that we get the balance right. At this point I would like to declare, as the member for South Brisbane has made public and put on Facebook last night, that I do own a number of investment properties. I also want to echo what someone else said earlier when they said that they are certainly not rich.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PURDIE:** I am not taking any of those interjections, but I appreciate that.

I heard the member for Mount Ommaney talk earlier about the bank of mum and dad. Everyone in this House knows that I am a former police officer. My wife is a schoolteacher. We had no bank of mum and dad. I certainly had no bank of mum and dad available to me and we made a lot of sacrifices and worked hard to accumulate those properties. I also want to declare that my family and I are currently renting. I think I have a good understanding of both sides of the equation.

For the member for South Brisbane on Facebook last night to call for me to recuse myself from this debate I think is outrageous seeing that not only have I worked hard and shown some aspiration to potentially build wealth in the future for my family, but also due to a change in our circumstances we are currently renting. Our lease is due to expire in February. Only a few weeks ago I emailed the agent and asked if we could look at a periodic lease going forward as we are only in a position to commit to another six or 12 months. We are waiting for that negotiation to commence. I, as others might be, am acutely aware of the impacts this bill will have on renters and landlords.

The bill's explanatory notes state that the objective of the bill is to improve housing stability in the rental market, secure housing that facilitates social, economic and cultural participation and promote the provision of a range of housing options that meet the diverse needs of Queenslanders. More broadly, Queensland housing is in a state of crisis. However, the emergency measures, the cash injection required and infrastructure needed from the government in order to seriously address the problem are simply not there.

In the lead-up to the last budget the Queensland Council of Social Services joined with 12 organisations to create the Town of Nowhere campaign, a desperate plea for the government to invest more in affordable housing. Unfortunately, the government's budgetary response fell well short, according to the CEO of the Queensland Council of Social Services, Aimee McVeigh. Aimee McVeigh

went on to say the current level of investment from the state government will only address 21 per cent of the housing register and this did not take into account the likelihood of an exponential increase. There are nearly 50,000 people seeking social housing in Queensland, a massive 70 per cent increase in just the last three years and just a 10th of the homes that are needed are being built.

At the estimates hearing in August it was revealed that there had only been a three per cent increase in social housing since Labor was elected in 2015 and new housing lots have dropped by 22.4 per cent overall. In my home region of the Sunshine Coast lot registration decreased by 20 per cent while the population grew by 15 per cent. This shameful lack of investment in infrastructure has not been seen for a generation. Labor admitted at the hearing that eight per cent of more than 25,000 Queensland families were desperate for a home and fell into the department's high and very high needs category. On average Queenslanders are waiting in excess of 28 months for social housing.

Closer to home on the Sunshine Coast is a housing crisis. On the coast we have 3,000 social houses. The Real Estate Institute of Queensland reported in July that 0.6 per cent of Sunshine Coast private rentals were vacant, with close to 1,800 local families waiting for public housing. The Domain property website last week revealed the Sunshine Coast was one of the most expensive property markets, with a median house price of \$825,000. The government has committed to just 140 new dwellings and these will take a long time to be delivered. Just one day is a long day when you do not have a roof over your head.

COVID has placed an enormous strain on housing availability with internal migration to Queensland at record rates, pushing up local prices and squeezing locals out of their own communities. More and more people will be facing homelessness or moving hundreds of kilometres away to put a roof over their heads. St Vincent de Paul Society CEO, Kevin Mercer, said that the crisis accommodation that previously helped people for 12 or 13 weeks at a time is now being used for 12 months or more because there is simply nowhere else to go. During the past year my electorate office, like many others, has been inundated with genuine requests for housing assistance. The stories have been heartbreaking and I understand departmental staff are doing all they can to assist, despite the appalling lack of solutions that the government has made available to them.

Having reviewed the current state of the housing market, I will now speak to the bill's specifics and a number of concerns that I have. After hearing the views of hundreds of submitters, in their statement of reservation my colleagues on the committee expressed their concern that the bill tips the balance of power towards the rights and needs of tenants. Stakeholders such as the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, the Property Owners' Association of Queensland and the Urban Development Institute of Australia raised concerns about the bill's adverse impact on the rights of lessors and property managers, specifically, the removal of a lessor's right to issue a without-grounds notice to tenants during a periodic agreement. This is based on the concern that the removal of that right would encourage a greater use of fixed-term agreements, which would be a disadvantage to tenants and lessors alike, and it would remove flexibility for both parties and reduce rental options.

Committee member and my colleague the member for Burnett, Steve Bennett, said that this provision of the bill will undermine the very tenet of the proposed changes as well as continuity and security in Queensland's rental market. The Queensland Law Society predicts that lessors will prefer not to enter into periodic tenancies with a tenant when the fixed-term agreement expires, given that under the bill there will be limited capacity to bring the periodic tenancy to an end. That would reduce the flexibility available to a tenant and the lessor when a short period of extension might otherwise suit both parties.

In addition, at the hearing the QLS said that they were are concerned that the legislation would discourage periodic tenancy, increasing the loss of housing stock for short-term rentals and requiring parties in conflict to remain in a landlord/tenant relationship. The REIQ also made the point that it is not always the landlord who wants to put a tenant on a periodic tenancy; we have to think about the tenants who choose to remain on periodic tenancies. For example, someone may want to purchase their own home but need an arrangement for a month or two longer in order to progress their future plans, which is similar to my situation at the moment. The abolition of the ability to terminate a periodic tenancy is not just a landlord's problem, notwithstanding the fact that there has been the ability to terminate. We will start to see landlords being more careful about entering into periodic tenancies and, unfortunately, we will see the mass issuing of notices to leave in order to end those periodic tenancies. That is the last thing Queensland needs at a time when we are seeing unprecedented numbers of people sleeping rough and tenancy rates at record lows.

In closing, I end on a note of hope. On Monday, ABC Sunshine Coast published a story about the rise in tiny home projects across the region and how they are being touted as one of the ways out of this mess—for a handful of people, anyway. The story was about how charities are doing the heavy lifting to provide affordable housing. I will give a few examples. In Nambour the not-for-profit Shack

Community Centre will offer tiny houses to accommodate homeless men. In Tewantin a similar story is playing out with charity Youturn Youth Support receiving \$150,000 from private donations and land donated by the Noosa Shire Council to build and locate two moveable tiny houses to accommodate younger people. Closer to my home, in Coolumbia a great manufacturing success story, Aussie Tiny Homes, which I visited recently, is providing homes to the Noosa Shire Council. They are projecting that next year they will custom build over 200 tiny mobile homes that could be used as granny flats or emergency accommodation.

I commend the bill to the House as it is all the government has for us, but I do support the amendments to be moved by our shadow minister. The LNP will continue to fight on behalf of vulnerable Queenslanders and we will continue to call for more action in this space.